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TROUBLED TIMES IN SPAIN.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

'THORP! I say—Don Robert—you are wanted. I've had a scamper to catch you!' and the speaker, a fair-haired English boy, flushed and breathless with running, stood gasping in the midst of the shady Alameda, while grave Spaniards, and dark-eyed *doñas* in the national veil and mantilla, glanced at us with a lazy wonder as they slowly promenaded past us. Young Vaughan, a newly arrived junior in our counting-house—from habit, I make use of the possessive pronoun, although at that time I was but a clerk in the employment of Stanbury and King, of Madrid and Crutched Friars, as Vaughan himself was—told me in broken words how 'the house' desired my immediate attendance in the partners' office; how the delayed French mail, which every one had for that day given up, had brought with it a letter marked with so urgent an appeal for extra haste in delivery, that the porter had conveyed it straight to the private residence of our principal, and hence this unexpected summons to myself.

Such a call as this, out of business hours, was very unusual, and, as I walked briskly beside the messenger down the long stretch of the white Alameda, where the leafy plane-trees screened the saunterers from the slanting beams of the summer sun, and where the fountains prattled pleasantly as their spray rose glistening above the flower-girdled marble of the basins where shoals of gold-fish led their tranquil life, I puzzled my brains to guess what it might portend. We were an old-fashioned, steady-going house of business, long established, and as methodical, generally speaking, as the tides. We had plenty to do, but it was done without unseemly hurry or feverish anxiety. Stanbury and King were good paymasters, considerate employers, but martinet in discipline. To have occupied a stool in their office, and to have left it with the good word and good-will of the heads of the house, was a strong recommendation to any young fellow seeking a snug clerkship in the City. I, Robert

Thorp, was then twenty-seven years old, and I had been for nine years in the service of the firm, and was, with the exception of the aged cashier, their chief clerk, and in the enjoyment of a liberal salary.

It speaks well for the good-nature of my companions, some of whom were my seniors in point of standing, that they should have acquiesced so cheerfully in the promotion that I had been so lucky as to obtain. There are few things which, ordinarily speaking, are so much resented by soldiers or civilians as having those younger than themselves 'put over their heads,' as the phrase is. But it had ever been a maxim in the traditions of the Anglo-Spanish house, that mere length of service conferred no claim to a vacancy. Stanbury and King never forsook, in age or sickness, those who had done their duty faithfully. But I have heard old Mr Stanbury himself observe, more than once, that it was 'one thing to give a pension, and another to fossilise a counting-house by giving a vested interest to the oldest book-keeper.' My own particular claims to the quick rise in station which had fallen me, were not, to my own mind, quite clear. I had, however, been twice despatched to South America to transact affairs of importance, and had been fortunate in gaining the approval of my employers. Perhaps, too, my natural aptitude for languages stood me in good stead. In Spanish I was indeed exceptionally fluent, and hence my office nickname of 'Don Robert,' for we all, Spaniards and English alike, were on terms of friendly and familiar equality when off duty.

I found the partners impatiently awaiting me—both of them were in evening dress, and, indeed, as I presently learned, they had been called away from a great dinner-party at Mr Stanbury's own mansion in the Calle del Rey, by the arrival of the French letter—and the hand which the principal, usually the calmest of men, mechanically held out to me as I entered, was dry and hot, and shook perceptibly. Mr King was also much excited. I had never seen my chiefs so strongly moved before in all the years of our intercourse.

'You tell him, John; I cannot,' said Mr Stanbury

hoarsely, and shading his eyes with his hand. 'Make it clear to him, and let him come to a decision at once.'

The partners—excellent men of business both, and estimable in all relations of life—were not in the least alike. Mr Stanbury was an elderly man, of a fine presence and dignified address, still handsome and erect, like some grand old tree that appears to defy the tooth of time. But I have often noticed that these imposing veterans, who bear prosperity well, are apt to be pitifully prostrated by the first storm-blast of ill fortune, and this seemed now to be the case. Mr King, a mild valetudinarian, whose flute, and cabinet of antique coins and medals, and garden stocked with rare exotics, took up most of his spare time, bore the shock, whatever it was, much the better of the two, and he it was who undertook to be spokesman.

The prudent, long-established firm, it was now explained to me, had for once deviated from its usual policy, and the exception threatened to prove ruinous. To be sure, it was less the hope of profit than a sentiment of a more generous character, that had brought the respected old house into the mire of difficulty; but the fact remained, and it was an ugly one. When Stanbury and King—then called Stanbury Brothers—was but newly planted on Spanish soil, a Spanish noble of high rank and vast possessions had rendered a great service to the grandfather of our principal. It was a long story, dating, as it did, from the days when the wealth-bearing galleons of the Spanish Plate Fleet used to lie for weeks and months at anchor off Ferrol or Cadiz, waiting for the royal 'indulto,' without which their commanders dared not unload a single bar of the precious freight of silver, for which all Europe was hungering. I had often heard old residents at Madrid relate the anxiety, the distress, and sometimes the ruin, of merchants unable to complete their engagements, because caprice or ill-humour delayed the signature of the king of Spain. Such was the dilemma which had nearly blighted the nascent fortunes of the house of Stanbury Brothers; and it had always been, since that time, a point of honour with the firm to be grateful to the descendants of the Duke of Medina-Alcantara, who had saved it from bankruptcy by his timely intercession with the royal hermit of the Escorial.

'Now, Thorp, it is no secret to you,' pursued Mr King, 'that the duke is one of those few great nobles who, in this country, take a keen interest in politics, and that he is more than suspected to have been the instigator of the late Carlist rising. He is at present under a species of honourable arrest at one of his Andalusian country seats, and will, I do not doubt, eventually receive a pardon. These hereditary grandees of Spain, with the Golden Fleece as a matter of right, from father to son, and a province for an estate, are never harshly dealt with when they conspire unsuccessfully. Were the duke to be imprisoned, or his property sequestered, all the blue blood of Castile would make common cause with him, without distinction of party. But in our case, unhappily, there is no such certainty of a harmless termination to the affair. We have advanced the duke large sums on mortgage, and these will, no doubt, one day be repaid us. His estates are, as you know, a princely patrimony, but his rents are irregular in coming

in; and commercial pledges, I need hardly say, cannot afford to wait unredeemed until the wool of the Medina merino-flocks, and the wine and oil of Alcantara, can be converted into cash.'

I listened with due attention, but with increasing perplexity, to this somewhat lengthy exordium. That the duke's involuntary defalcation might have placed the firm in some temporary embarrassment was credible enough, though, from what I knew of their resources, I could not believe the difficulty to be insuperable. But what, in the name of common-sense, was the object of my being taken into counsel on such a matter, and what imaginable help could I be expected to render? Mr Stanbury, who had been sitting all this time with his head half-averted, and who had only corroborated his partner's fluent statement by an occasional groan, or an impatient gesture, of course could not guess what was passing in my mind. But Mr King, in the midst of his own eagerness and agitation, found time to note my puzzled look, and smiled good-naturedly. 'This is a riddle to you, my young friend, I see. Wait a moment, and you will understand it better,' said he, and then resumed his narrative, which I will render in a condensed form.

It appeared that, as if to confirm the proverb that misfortunes never come alone, exactly at the period when the failure of the Carlist rising had put it out of the duke's power to keep his engagements with our firm, the Buenos Ayres house with which we had the largest commercial transactions had suspended payment. These combined losses, following blow on blow at a moment when most of the available capital of the firm was locked up in investments not immediately remunerative, threatened ruin. There was much paper afloat on 'Change bearing the well-known names of Stanbury and King, and unless these bills could be punctually met, the good old firm must go down like a foundering ship. Under these circumstances, the ducal debtor of the house had been appealed to, and not without effect. The Duke of Medina, like most heads of great Spanish families, possessed some extremely valuable jewels, heir-looms worthy even of royalty, but which, save at a coronation or a state-wedding, seldom saw the light. These jewels he had, some weeks earlier, confided to the Anglo-Spanish firm, with permission to pledge them in any foreign country for whatever sum could be procured, and with the understanding that they were to be redeemed when His Excellency's debt to the house should be discharged. The diamonds had been sent to France, and a heavy advance made on their security, but much delay had occurred in the transmission of the amount, which had not yet reached Madrid.

'And,' continued Mr King, 'as ill-luck would have it, the French fellow from the Paris diamond-dealer's has taken fright at the dreadful stories that are flying about the frontier, and won't stir a step beyond Perpignan. To send the money by post is not so simple as it seems. Five mails, in the course of the last thirteen days, as you are aware, have been cut off by the guerrillas; while even should the remittance come safely to hand, no local banker is now in a position—thanks to the financial disturbance and disorganisation that civil war creates—to honour so large a cheque at sight. What we want, Thorp, my dear fellow, is to send some one, on whose discretion and fidelity we can

fully rely, to fetch this money, and you are the man on whom our choice has fallen.'

I daresay that, on the first receipt of this unexpected proposition, I looked rather blank. It was not a very pleasant one. Undue timidity is not, I hope, a part of my character, but I frankly admit that the prospect of the double journey between Spain and France, at such a time, by no means tempted me. I am writing of days in which railways were not, as they now are, numbered among the 'costas de España.' That cosmopolitan mode of travel which levels national distinctions, and which causes the yawning pilgrim with his rug around his knees to ignore all boundary-lines and demarcations of race, was as yet, as concerned the Peninsula, the mere dream of a few speculative engineers. The diligence, slow, dirty, and comfortless; the cramped limits and feverish speed of the mail-courier's carriage; the picturesque snail's pace of the *arriero*'s caravan of pack-mules; or a rapid and expensive ride 'à franc étrier' with a mounted guide and a relay at every post-house, were the alternatives that lay before the voyager. The accommodation provided for the wayfarer was of the scantiest; inns, such as *Gil Blas* and *Don Quixote* found them, being thinly scattered along the ill-kept roads, so that nothing save necessity was likely to induce any one, cognisant of the miseries that awaited him in these starveling and flea-haunted hosteltrees, to undertake a journey within the compass of Spain.

There were worse lions in the path, however, than the mere prospect of dust and mosquitos, of a lean larder and a squalid bed-chamber. Politically, the late rising of the Carlists had proved a hopeless failure, but socially, it was yet a pest and a power in the land. The fiercer partisans of the exiled dynasty, unable to cope in the field with the disciplined forces of the crown, were yet buzzing and stinging like so many infuriated wasps, and strove to make their activity and knowledge of the country counterbalance the superior strength of the military. Among the mountains of the northern frontier, a harrassing guerrilla warfare was perpetually kept up, stragglers being cut off, weakly escorted convoys assailed, and frequent and sanguinary outrages committed against the 'Christinoes,' as those who favoured the cause of the young queen were still designated. As usually occurs during civil strife, the enemies of all law and order, the very scum and sediment of the criminal classes, were astir under the mask of patriotism, and many a dark deed which was credited to the zealots of legitimacy, was in effect perpetrated by the escaped galley-slaves and professional marauders who infested the disturbed districts. Very ugly stories, four-fifths of which never found their way into the columns of French or English newspapers, were rife in Madrid, and each fresh act of arbitrary severity on the part of the troops appeared to be the signal for barbarous reprisals by the vindictive, though baffled faction of the Legitimist pretender. To traverse the scene of disorder, and in charge of valuable property, was by no means a pleasant errand.

'You have not told him,' said the principal hoarsely, after a moment of silence had ensued, 'what are the prospects that lie before him, in the event of success. That may make a difference.'

'That is true,' said Mr King quickly. 'You see, Thorp, Mr Stanbury and I both feel that this is no routine duty which we are justified in asking you,

merely as a trusted stipendiary of the firm, to undertake. You are a determined fellow, I believe, and a sensible one, I am aware, and have doubtless quite as clear a knowledge of the dangers to be run as either Mr Stanbury or myself can have. We have no desire to hoodwink you, even were it in our power. The confidence which I have just reposed in you should be sufficient to prove that we regard you as something else than a clerk, and that we are quite willing to— In fact, you have only to discharge your mission as well and as faithfully as you have hitherto served us in matters of less account, and it rests with yourself to become a junior partner in the house.'

I felt the blood rush to my face, and I tried to stammer out some words of acknowledgment, but broke down in them. That last speech of Mr King's had swept away my hesitation at once, and the rough and perilous route, with all its snares and difficulties, suddenly appeared to lie smooth and smiling before me. 'A partner!' a member of the grand old firm! Never yet, in the traditions which clung to the ancient counting-house, was mention made of such an honour being paid to even the oldest and most valued subordinate, not allied by blood to the founders of the house. Clarence King, Mr King's nephew, was a partner, and on the occasion of his rare visits to Madrid, we outsiders had always been accustomed to regard the good-humoured, pudding-faced young man with much admiration, dashed perhaps with a little envy, as one born in the purple of commerce. And such promotion as this, never yet dreamed of, was to fall to my lot, after but nine years spent in the country, and at twenty-seven years of age!

There was still much to be settled, and a considerable time was spent in the discussion of preliminaries, but at length I had received my credentials and full instructions, and no more remained to be said. I was to travel, as rapidly as possible, to Perpignan, and there to seek out M. Dubois, the agent of the Paris diamond-merchant, and receive from him the funds of which he was the depositary. I was to be careful to enter France by a different road from that which I should select for quitting it, since the frontier towns and villages on both sides of the border swarmed with spies, in the employment, not only of the malcontents and the government, but of the robbers who had assumed the colours of Don Carlos as a mere excuse for carrying on their trade of plunder. The risk I ran on my outward route was of course comparatively small, for, plainly dressed, with light baggage, and just enough coin for the exigencies of the journey, I should not be deemed a prize worth capturing, should I encounter highwaymen, while my papers being strictly *en règle* would satisfy the jealous suspicion of the authorities. But the homeward flight was the really dangerous one, since not only were there dangers from brigands prowling for prey, and guerrillas maddened by hunger and defeat, but the Queen's troops were nearly as much to be dreaded as their rebellious adversaries. Severe watch was kept up for Carlist emissaries entering Spain from France with the sums needed to buy arms, and to keep ablaze the embers of the fratricidal contest, and were I to be arrested with the money in my possession, it might prove impossible, without long and ruinous delay, to prove that it was not destined for the use of the beaten faction. 'And we must have it on the

nineteenth, when those bills fall due, or the shutters of Stanbury and King will be put up for ever,' said Mr King, with sad emphasis.

I was to start as early as possible, although my preparations could scarcely be completed before the afternoon of the following day, it being necessary that my passport should receive all manner of visas and official stamps before I departed; and it was arranged that I should set out by diligence, and in a direction differing from that which was my true point, in order to throw off the scent any inquisitive persons, agents of the robber bands, or of broken guerrillas little better than robbers, who might have conjectured the object of my journey. Once clear of the capital, I could strike across country towards the French frontier; and when I returned, it was agreed that I should do so in the humblest and most unassuming fashion, in the character of a poor artist, taking portraits to pay his expenses, and carrying home sketches of Pyrenean scenery; with plenty of which, as well as with drawing materials, I was provided, while my own skill as an amateur with brush and pencil was sufficient to enable me to sustain the part assumed with tolerable credit.

'I need not recommend you to be discreet. You understand, I am sure, too well how much depends on the concealment of the direction and object of your journey, to reveal anything which might excite curiosity on the subject. At the office, it would be best to say briefly that you should be absent for a week on business, and if you were to drop a hint as to your never having previously visited the Medina-Alcantara estates, all would conjecture your destination to be Andalusia. But to no one—to no one, Mr Thorp—not even at the house of your friend, worthy Mr Gray—must you be explicit as to the nature of the expedition, or as to the promotion that awaits you when we welcome you safe back again.'

Such had been Mr King's last words of injunction, and they rang in my ears, once and again, as I left the office and made the best of my way along the moonlit streets in the direction of a quiet suburb on the Guadalaxara road.

The part of the town which I was now traversing was one very familiar to me, although it lay remote from the more attractive and fashionable quarters of the Castilian capital. I knew every yard of the white and dusty road which succeeded to the formal pavement of the streets; every wine-shop, with its withered branch hanging over the door, and its score of purple-streaked casks, and bloated pig-skins full of coarse grape-juice, dimly visible through the vine-leaves of its trellised verandah. There was the long range of stabling, gleaming white, and shaded by cork-trees and gnarled sycamores, where a hundred mules and horses rattled their chains, as they munched the straw and barley that filled the roomy manger before them. That garden was famous for *tertulias*, with French fireworks and rope-dancing to alternate with the expressive grace of the national *bolero* and *fandango*. Those many windows, the green jalousies of which seemed never to be unfastened, belonged to the ancestral home of one of those proud and taciturn families peculiar to Spain, eking out their narrow means by eternal self-denial, and resignedly dining on beans and stock-fish, while glorious Murillos hung on the walls of their darkling rooms, and massive plate em-

blazoned with half-forgotten coronets and quarterings, grew mouldy in their oaken chests.

At last I stopped before the low garden-wall of a cottage, almost hidden by clustering jasmine and climbing roses, a cottage neater and trimmer than its neighbours, and around which clung, as by some unforgotten association of ideas, somewhat of the English charm of home. I was a frequent visitor there. The irate little dog that, as I laid my hand upon the latch, dashed noisily out to resent the intrusion, soon changed his shrill bark into a whimper of cordial recognition; the dark-visaged old servant, Dolores, who thrust her swarthy face and loose gray hair out of an upper casement when Wasp gave the alarm, grinned amicably as she returned my *buenos noches*; and somebody came with a light step and a bright look to meet me, as I entered the tiny hall—somebody, whose simple muslin, and the ribbon which she wore, or the flower that her own white fingers had just gathered in the garden, became her better, to my thinking, at any rate, than costly robes and gleaming jewels grace the favourites of Fortune. Pretty, dear, good little Ruth, dearer to me than all the world besides, and whom I now hoped to call my wife, thanks to the good news I had that day heard, far earlier than I had hitherto deemed would be the case. And then Ruth's father, awakened from his nap in the cool verandah, where the moonbeams played among the pure white blossoms of the jasmine boughs, came forward too, to bid me welcome.

Welcome, indeed, I had been for years past in the unpretentious, but not comfortless abode of old Mr Gray, senior to all the many clerks who drew their pay from Stanbury and King. He was a mild, white-haired old gentleman, who justly prided himself on the length of his services, and on the high esteem in which the heads of the house held him. For five-and-fifty years had he been in the employment of the firm, and of these no less than forty had been spent in Spain. Yet his salary was lower than my own, and his office rank not so high. Why this was, it would be hard to say. Mr Gray was, in some respects, a model to all possible clerks. He was a magnificent penman. His book-keeping was faultless. He corresponded accurately and elegantly in four languages. His industry was only to be paralleled by comparing it with that of clockwork; and his integrity and devotion to the firm were proverbial. But he was one of those gentle, easily contented souls, devoid of a spark of ambition, who feel no pang of regret as others pass them in the race of life; and I doubt if it ever occurred to him to consider himself ill-used, because his juniors had so promptly outstripped him.

Mr Gray was a widower; and of four children born to him on the uncongenial Spanish soil, Ruth alone survived to be the hope and solace of his old age. Her sisters and her brother had died, one by one, as blossoms wither in the time of blight; and, indeed, Madrid, with its hot sun, and parching dust, alternating with heavy hail-storms and icy gusts from the bleak Castilian mountains, is but a murderous foster-mother to the young and delicate. To send Ruth away—far from the high table-land of limestone; far from the green-blue summer sky, the fierce dry wind that blew almost unchecked all the weary leagues that divided us from scorching Africa, the sudden chill, following on sultry heat,

which we owed to our proximity to the gaunt Sierra ; far away to an English school, and to English playmates—such had been the old clerk's care, and perhaps no one but himself ever knew how much the sacrifice cost him. He was one of those men, essentially English, whose life is centred in home-ties and household pleasures. Well as he did his work, he was always eager to return to the little dwelling, in which he had established his meek Lares and Penates long years ago. As for amusements and the racket of the city, no hermit could have been more indifferent to theatre and bull-fight, to reviews and pageants ; while, well as he spoke Spanish, Mr Gray declined the invitations which his well-known merit and rare accomplishments obtained for him.

For the quiet, retiring old clerk was a first-rate musician ; and his flute, and his violin, and his voice, when he could be tempted before a select audience to sing some of those exquisite early English ballads, the cadences and spirit of which he so well appreciated, were renowned throughout the small British society of the metropolis. He was a scientific chess-player too, and a draughtsman and etcher of no mean merits, and the taste for landscape-painting which was common to both of us had just served to establish a friendship between Mr Gray and myself. I remember that when I began to drop in at the cottage for a cup of coffee and quiet chat over lights and shades and skylines, and the relative beauties of Poussin and Salvator Rosa, my host bored me a little by his affectionate garrulosity on the subject of his daughter, soon to return to him from England. Strangers to whose laudations we are compelled to listen seldom turn out very interesting when brought before us in the flesh, and I fully expected that when Miss Gray did arrive, I should find in that much bepraised young lady a mere commonplace school-girl, tart or insipid, as the case may be. I was wrong. She came, and I fell in love with her, and my love was returned, but our marriage seemed a weary way off in the dim future.

Mr Gray, himself the meekest and most placid of men, could yet be stubborn enough where Ruth was concerned. I am not sure that he had not been slightly ambitious for her sake, and that, well as he liked me personally, he would not have much preferred a richer son-in-law. It was not, however, in his nature to thwart his daughter's inclinations when once her innocent heart had been given. But on one point he was firm. There should be no early marriage, with its probabilities of struggling and anxiety, no pinched housekeeping and daily efforts to keep the wolf from the door. Perhaps it was the recollection of the first years of his own married life, with a sickly wife pining in the sultry summer weather of the Castilian table-land, and but scanty resources, that had made the widowed father almost nervously apprehensive of poverty for the one ewe-lamb that fate had spared to him. Now I was in receipt of a salary that was ample for my wants as a bachelor, but it was plain that if I married on my present income, the strictest economy would be necessary ; while Mr Gray, who had to keep up the life insurance that he had long ago effected for Ruth's future provision, could spare little or nothing to help us.

'We must wait,' Ruth used to say, in her pretty smiling fashion, when I grew petulant at what, with a young man's impatience, I deemed the

unreasonable caution of her prudent father : 'we are not very old, Robert, dear, and we must look forward hopefully.'

And indeed I have observed that through the first stages of a long engagement, girls do wait very cheerfully indeed ; but the masculine nature is, I am afraid, rougher and more apt to chafe at delay.

And now, without warning, the good fairy, Fortune, had waved her radiant wand to dispel the clouds that had hitherto hung over our heads. Robert Thorp, a clerk in the house of Stanbury and King, was a very different person, in a worldly sense, from the same Robert when advanced to be a partner in the firm. I was to 'come in' with a minimum income of nine hundred, and my share of the profits would slowly but surely increase with seniority. There could be no imprudence, now, in such a marriage as that which had but lately seemed far, far remote, and I longed to communicate the happy tidings to Ruth and her father, but my pledge to Mr King of course placed a padlock on my lips. I merely mentioned, then, that I should be absent from Madrid for a few days, on the house's business ; and Mr Gray expressed no curiosity as to my destination or its object, but simply advised me not to forget my sketch-book, as it was scarcely possible to travel anywhere in the Peninsula without seeing something—a rugged ravine, a quaint old inn, a mouldering tower, or some crumbling gem of Moorish architecture, worth the trouble of transferring it to paper.

But Ruth, at the first announcement of my intended departure, looked sad. A sort of shadow seemed to have fallen over my darling's sunny face, and there was something melancholy in the expression of her gentle blue eyes as she watched my movements. Yet my absence would, as she knew, be brief, and I was not precisely one of those stay-at-home persons whose projected journeys never fail to inspire astonishment and apprehension into those who know them. It was often my duty to pass days and weeks in Cadiz or Barcelona, and when Ruth and I first met, I had but just returned from my second trip to South America. Why, then, should she look as sad as if she had some foreboding of evil that was to befall me on what might, for aught she knew, be the most commonplace and unadventurous of excursions. I was myself in high spirits, for was not our happiness assured to us by the promotion that was to reward success, while as for failure, I dismissed that contingency as unworthy of a thought. My only regret was that honour forbade me to share the welcome intelligence with the inmates of the cottage ; and when I took my leave, and, holding Ruth's hand in mine under the shadow of the porch, draped in clusters of the perfumed jasmine, pressed my lips to her fair cheek, I whispered to her that I should soon be back, and that I hoped—I did hope—the bright day to which we both looked forward might be hastened in its coming—who knew !

To my surprise, Ruth, instead of sharing my sanguine buoyancy of spirit, trembled perceptibly, and there was a sob in her sweet voice as she said : 'O Robert, I daresay I am silly, but I wish you were not going to-morrow.'

'And why not, you puss ?' said I laughingly.

'Because— Oh, I am sure you will think me very foolish ; but I had, last night, such a singular

dream. You and I were somewhere, where we had never been before, high up among the savage mountains, with rocks, and pine-trees, and snow around us, and a great fire was burning in the open air, and round it sat—ah, such a set of dreadful wretches—their hideous faces and the remembrance of their horrid laughter make me shudder, although it was only a dream—and, and—I forgot much, for it was so confused, but I know that we were falling, falling through the air, from a terrible height, and next I was borne up as if on the wings of some immense bird, and I lost sight of you altogether, and then I cried out, and woke. Strange, was it not?

The old servant now came slowly towards us to open the garden-gate for me, so I had but time to laugh and bid Ruth be of good cheer, and forget her dream, as I stooped and kissed her once more ; and then I strode homewards through the bright moonlight. But next day, when the tedious formalities as to my passport had all been complied with, and, deep in the afternoon, I jolted out of Madrid in the slow and ill-horsed diligence bound for Toledo, the memory of Ruth's sad face and the tremor of Ruth's mournful voice recurred to me again and again. But I drove the recollection from me, sure as I felt of the success that lay before me.

BRAIN OR BICEPS?

THE interest attaching to the annual University Boat-race has now become so enormous as to justify us in terming it a National Event. The Derby itself, formerly the great English carnival, has begun to pale before it, even in the mere numbers who attend it, while the variety of rank and station of the spectators is, of course, infinitely greater. With many it is held naughty to attend a race-course ; whereas no one, in his right mind, has any objection to witness a trial of strength and skill where honour alone is the meed of victory. Upon the last anniversary, it is no exaggeration to say that it was difficult to procure a cab—especially a Hansom—in London streets, by reason of their absence at the river-side ; while the carriages of the job-masters were even still more in request for the same purpose. On the railway lines that led to the aquatic course, the trains were despatched with almost the rapidity of minute-guns to the scene of action, and we have known of a case where^a a gentleman—honoured with the convoy of ladies—had to wait for *seventeen* trains before he could find sitting-room for his fair charges. On the other hand, the ordinary traffic was suspended, so that the very bridges might be occupied by spectators at no less than fifteen shillings a head. In order that not an instant might be lost in telegraphing the momentous event to distant places, and also that the operation might not be impeded, the wires were placed on an island in the river ; and so soon as the first boat passed the winning-post, the news was flashed to Calcutta, to Melbourne, and every city where our countrymen, though living 'in converse seasons,' have the same sympathy—perhaps even more—with all that speaks of English skill and prowess, as we have at home. Not a room that commanded a view of the course but fetched a price from fifty guineas downwards, not a window could be hired for less than five ; nor is it beyond the mark to say that many a householder on the banks of

Thames defrays his whole yearly rental by letting it on that one day—nay, only for an hour or two—to eager sightseers. So extraordinary an attraction, however, it is scarcely necessary to say, excites some reprobation, and perhaps not a little envy. Where is the actor, where the preacher, where the writer even, who can procure one-fifteenth part of such an audience, and hold them—even though it be for a few minutes—in such magic thrall? and not a few pens have endeavoured, of late, to stem the current of this wild enthusiasm. The late Mr Skeat, the surgeon, published several letters in the *Times*, asserting, from his own experience, and that of his professional brethren, that many a constitution was permanently injured by these trying conflicts, 'the evils of which are not so immediate as remote ;' nor did his observations apply only to the University Boat-race, but to the bad effects of training and rowing in the many hundreds of young men at Oxford and Cambridge who never attain to the proud distinction of contending in the supreme struggle, or becoming, as the phrase goes, 'University Oars.' Still more recently, one of our most popular novelists has written a fiction directly attacking this over-indulgence in 'muscular development,' and has since dramatised it in our most popular theatre, so that those who applauded the rival crews for their prowess in the morning, might have gone in the evening to behold the shocking effects of too great a cultivation of the biceps represented on the stage.

And now Dr Edward Morgan has put forth an apology for the 'Derby of the Thames,' in a thick volume, termed *University Oars*, which is nothing more nor less than a 'critical inquiry into the after-health of the men who have rowed in the Oxford and Cambridge boat-races' for the last forty years. The details are in themselves uninteresting enough, but the result arrived at is, that the men who row in these matches live, upon the whole, rather longer than other people ; from which the doctor reasons that the exertion cannot be unhealthy. It seems to us that he might just as well affirm that, because some very poor men live to a great age, hunger, and poverty, and nakedness are not inimical to health or longevity. How many half-starved and half-clothed children die in the early stages of life's journey, should be computed in the one case ; and, in the other, how many young gentlemen break down under their 'training,' and never reach the goal at Mortlake at all. These racing crews are the picked men for strength and muscle of their respective universities, and since their after-life is for the most part spent in the quiet duties of the priesthood, they ought to live ever so much *longer* than ordinary men. The inquiry of Dr Morgan seems to us to be directed where no doubt it can be most easily satisfied, but where the result is without significance. If these sixteen powerful and athletic young men were found to die more quickly than any ordinary sixteen individuals of the same age, it appears to us that such spectacles ought absolutely to be forbidden ; and, indeed, of boating-men generally, since their thews and sinews incline them to such a diversion—or, rather, to such a calling, for to that has the practice attained among our undergraduates—it might be predicated that they would live longer than those whose physical powers were of a more moderate kind. Whatever may be urged against Dr Morgan, it cannot certainly be objected

that he has 'proved too much,' for he has proved next to nothing at all. Of course, he has overturned such fanatical antagonists as assert that half the crews perish of consumption, or that every other year the 'stroke' dies of heart-disease at the very moment of victory, and in the shadow of Barnes Bridge. But into the question as to whether it is wholesome even for a strong man to spend long weeks in asceticism and self-denial—too often made up for, when 'Ramadan' is over, by excess of all kinds—in order to succeed in a boat-race, he does not enter at all. On the other hand, he urges eloquently enough the advantages of physical exertion in youth, and contrasts in very striking terms the standard of health in commercial life with that of the more liberal professions. He supposes a man respectable, and respected, who has made his money—and a good deal of it—in trade. Such a man, he avers (and he is evidently quoting from an extensive medical experience), is rarely to be seen walking. So far from taking the nine miles a day declared by Professor Parkes to be necessary for a healthy man, he does not walk so much in a fortnight. He rides in a 'bus, or 'takes the Underground,' or 'calls a Hansom.' He shrinks from all physical activity beyond carrying an umbrella, carving a joint, or brushing his hair—nay, even *that* is done 'by machinery.' The inaptitude of a man like this for hard work is accounted for thus: 'At the age of fourteen or fifteen, he is removed from school, and placed in an office, where he "acquires business habits;" an initiation into the mysteries of trade, which usually consists of sitting on a high stool in stuffy air for eight or nine hours a day; often far longer than is at all required for the fulfilment of his work, while he is rarely permitted to indulge in any kind of active exercise. To a youth of this age, an occasional cricket-match, a game of foot-ball, or a row on the river, would prove an invaluable boon, a very elixir of life at a time when the whole system is pinning for development. But these recreations are looked upon with suspicion by his employers, as likely to bring the "house" into disrepute. Even when his services are not actually needed, he is still doomed to loll over the weary desk, because, forsooth, it is the orthodox way of spending the day. At five or six o'clock he returns to his lodgings, jaded and weary, not so much with the work that he has done, as with the depressing influences which surround his occupation. After a while, say, he becomes a successful man of business. He makes money, and marries young. Years revolve, and in course of time he takes his numerous progeny to some sea-side watering-place. And how is the holiday spent? Not in long walks among the mountains with which he is surrounded, an exercise which would year by year renew the flagging energies of his frame; not in a "long and a strong pull" on the sea; but in loitering about the beach, in watching the bathing-machines, in gazing at Punch and Judy, in picking shrimps, and in listening to the discordant melodies of German bands.'

To the inexperienced eye, this lazy gentleman is well enough; but when he comes to Dr Morgan (as he is sure to do), and that gentleman begins to thump him about, he finds 'no honest expansion of the thoracic cavity,' in other words, the patient wheezes; the lung-tissue has no elasticity; and

the walls of the chest are padded with 'adipose tissue' (we wish the doctor would say *Fat*) to as great an extent as the rest of the system. His constitution requires coddling; the slightest exposure to draughts gives him rheumatism; cold air gives him bronchitis; and he 'can't be too careful' as to what he eats and drinks. Beer is destruction, champagne is fatal; and he is an old man, in fact, at forty. Moreover, when advised to retire from the counting-house, and live in the country, he finds that state of existence intolerably dull, through never having been trained to enjoy its pleasures. This is no doubt a correct picture of the physical condition of very many of our successful commercial men. On the other hand, 'compare, for a moment, the existence of such a father with the life of his more fortunate son, who is sent to a public school, and afterwards to the university. From his earliest boyhood he is trained in every variety of manly exercise; he rides, shoots, rows, plays at cricket, and is an adept at athletics; his muscular propensities are such as to arouse the fears of his anxious parents, who are lost in wonder at the suicidal folly of their offspring. In spite, however, of their gloomy forebodings, that physical collapse, which they so surely anticipated, delays its advent, and the son, who was doomed to an early decease, grows up to manhood vigorous and strong. Having once fairly developed his system, having put on chest and muscle, even should it be his lot to follow the pursuits of a man of business, he will be able to enjoy life, and look forward to his annual holiday with feelings of keen delight. In fact, whether his vacation be spent among the mountains of Switzerland, or upon the Scotch moors, or amid the Welsh hills, he will find no difficulty in passing his time. He will be able to walk for six or eight hours a day without discomfort; and in this manner, building up new tissues, and casting off such as are effete, his season of leisure will not prove tediously long, nor will he be likely to pine for a return to the grimy surroundings of a city warehouse.'

All this is no doubt very true: it is not wholesome for any lad to sit on a high stool for eight or ten hours a day in a stuffy atmosphere; but surely it is going too far in the other direction to prescribe a seat on a boating cushion for even a third of that time, and with his ideas probably occupied with oars and rowlocks for the remainder of it. What *Paterfamilias* naturally objects to is, not his son's boating, but his doing little or nothing else; and how monopolising that pursuit becomes to a youth who in any way distinguishes himself at it, any university man will testify. The fact is, that recreation, and especially of an out-of-door kind, is now much more considered and provided for at our seats of learning than the studies from which it is supposed to be a relaxation. The hobby of 'muscular education' is being ridden to excess, and the development of the biceps is thought of more account than that of the brain.

Dr Morgan, indeed, has the courage to maintain that even the continuous application to boating that is necessary to one who would be a 'university oar' is no hindrance to mental advancement; and to prove his case, cites the fact that, out of three hundred of these champions of the river, there are three bishops, two judges, and an historian. That six men out of fifty, or about one in eight, should distinguish themselves in this way, is no doubt a

large proportion ; but here, again, he ignores the social advantages possessed by the men in question, just as he ignored their superiority in *physique*. The fact of these three hundred young men having so much time to spare at the oar, shews that they had also money to spend, and money is of no slight assistance to success in every calling ; moreover, as almost all were destined for the bar or the pulpit, there is no wonder that it was in those lines that they distinguished themselves. As to the historian, indeed, we have nothing to say, except that we should like to know his name ; but with respect to the others, the proof of mental superiority would have been more satisfactory—since bishops not seldom owe their position to having been private tutors in great families, and judgeships, as Mr Galton has shewn us, are almost hereditary posts—if Dr Morgan could have instanced some really eminent name. The simple fact is, that it is a downright—well, paradox, to assert that young men who spend a very large proportion of their time in the practice of athletics in the open air, which, even if it induce robustness, cannot but make them prone to eat and sleep, are more intelligent than those who have more time to give to study, and some of whom do study. It is merely the assertion of a man who has got a weak case, and knows he is arguing against the common-sense of mankind. No honest man who has reached forty, and has been to college, and who does *not* belong to 'a mutual admiration society,' will affirm that those of his undergraduate friends who were boating-men have generally distinguished themselves beyond those whose outdoor pursuits were not so engrossing. Nay, if one of these amphibious persons does make his mark in the world, we naturally exclaim : 'And yet he was in the University Boat !' just as in the case of a young nobleman who may make a hit in statesmanship or literature : 'And yet he is a lord !' In the latter's case, can it be seriously urged, even by the greatest admirer of the hereditary system, that his position as a flattered child of fortune, toadied from his birth, and deprived of the ordinary incentives to exertion, was *not* disadvantageous to him ? And so, though in a less degree, does the case stand with the young gentlemen who devote themselves to boating. They *may* distinguish themselves intellectually, but if they do so, it is in spite, and not because of their aquatic predilections.

LADY TRAVELLERS.

OPINION will always be divided as to the propriety of women travelling into distant and unknown countries, and following a way so much opposed to that which nature seems to have traced for them. Certain it is that, if all women took the fancy into their heads to be explorers, the world would have a right to complain ; but there are those who, like Madame Ida Pfeiffer, have no home-ties, who are bound to their country by no duty, and these cannot be blamed for following the desire of their hearts, cherished from their very infancy. There are others, also, who have been carried away by chance far from their native soil, and for these it is no longer a caprice to which they have yielded, but a sacrifice to which they submit. During the last two centuries, there have been many illustrious women who have travelled

over the world, making it a field of study ; and a slight sketch of some of these will be the purpose of the following paper.

It is well known that the excellent St Louis, king of France, in 1250 had an earnest desire to convert the whole world to Christianity, and for this end sent two monks into Tartary. After many months' dreary march over the steppes of the Don, they reached the capital of Genghis Khan, and found the first female traveller of whom we have any authentic account. Established in this distant spot was a young woman of twenty-five, calling herself Paquette, married to a Parisian, Guillaume Buchier, who carried on the business of goldsmith at the court of the Tartar emperor. In those days, when books were not written with the detail of our present time, the history of her adventures can only be slightly traced. She had been captured in war by the Hungarians, and passed from one encampment to another to the very heart of Mongolia. Her delight was great when she saw the monks, and she at once undertook the office of interpreter for them. When they returned, her great desire was to accompany them ; but meeting with serious opposition, she was obliged to relinquish the hope of revisiting her native country. In the days when a journey from Paris to Strasburg was looked upon as almost impracticable, the woman who had traversed two thousand leagues over the most barbarous countries deserves a special mention.

A much more extraordinary traveller will be found in the nun Monja Alferez, whose romantic adventures, published in an old Spanish volume, would scarcely be believed, were they not confirmed by other documents. Having been placed in a Dominican convent, she escaped in the dress of a man, when fifteen years old, and entering the service of a gentleman as his page, traversed the greater part of Spain, meeting with adventures as amusing as those of Gil Blas. But an irresistible desire for more distant travel led her to embark, in 1603, on a flotilla destined for Peru. Here she enlisted in the army destined for Chili, fought bravely against the Araucanes, gaining the rank of standard-bearer, and afterwards that of captain. A sad incident stopped her course for a while, for she had the misfortune to kill her own brother without knowing him. After this, she shut herself up in a convent again. But such a life was little suited to her taste. She again joined the army, and fought in many distant parts of South America, which the Spaniards were desirous of subjugating. Once she was taken prisoner by the Dutch, and when released, returned to Cuzco, where a new adventure awaited her. Being at a gaming-table, her neighbour, an arrogant Spaniard, abstracted some of her money when her eyes were turned away. She detected him, drew her sword, and attacked him. He was well covered by his cuirass, so that her blows glided over him without injury, whilst she was wounded in the breast, and fell, bathed in blood. But reuniting her failing powers, she rose, rushed after the culprit, and, as the soldiers said, made him swallow her sword. He was dead. Appealing to the bishop for protection, she told him her secret, and he remitted her once more to the convent of St Claire.

Longing for new adventures, she obtained permission to return to Spain, bade adieu to her companions, and following the course of the Rio

Magdalena, embarked at Carthagena, and landed at Cadiz in 1624. Her reputation had preceded her, and every one wished to see so remarkable a woman. Going to Madrid, she was presented to Count Olivarez, and followed in the suite of the Count de Javier, who was going to Rome for the Jubilee. She crossed through France, but in Piedmont was thrown into prison as a spy; and when her liberty was restored, it was only on condition that she should return to Spain. In the deepest destitution, she retraced her way on foot, and was obliged to beg. Whilst endeavouring to see the king, she was attacked by brigands; but at length the Marquis de Montes-Claras presented her at the court of Madrid, when she obtained a pension, a recognition of her title of standard-bearer, and permission to wear men's clothes.

Still determined to reach Rome, she embarked, and landed at Genoa, when she again got into difficulties through a quarrel with an Italian soldier; but at length she had the honour of kissing the foot of Urban VIII. He listened to her story with interest, and she was soon surrounded by a circle of the nobility, who received her with pleasure. She was then nearly forty years of age. Little is known of her after, though some say she made another voyage to America, and died when about sixty. She was very tall and manly in appearance, with strongly marked but plain features, and her whole air was resolute and soldier-like.

In the town of Châtillon was born, in 1727, one of the most courageous men of science, M. Commerson. He began by making long botanic excursions in the Alps and Pyrenees, setting out alone almost without money and provisions, returning ill, wounded by falls, and worn out with his long rambles. One day he was caught like Absalom by his hair, and remained suspended over a torrent; nothing could be done but to tear off his scalp, and fall into the river at the risk of his life. This was the prelude: afterwards he joined Bougainville in his long voyages of discovery, and rendered great services to the science of natural history. His servant, Baret, who had often assisted him, entreated that he might accompany the party, as his greatest desire was to see distant lands. As he knew something of botany, Commerson agreed to the proposal, quite ignorant of the fact that he was taking a woman. She had always worn men's clothes, was very intelligent, and about twenty-six. The sailors even were deceived. She followed her master in all his excursions, in the midst of the streams and icy mountains round the Strait of Magellan, and during these painful marches carried provisions, arms, and portfolios of plants, with a strength and courage which often gained for her the title of a beast of burden.

It was reserved for savages to discover her true character. M. Commerson landed in Tahiti to carry on his studies, giving his books as usual to Baret, who was following, when the natives surrounded her, crying out that she was a woman; and the tumult was so great that she had to be protected back to the ship. There, with her eyes full of tears, she confessed that it was true: being an orphan, poverty had made her disguise herself for protection, and her anxiety to travel had led her to embark in this ship. She always behaved with the utmost propriety, and remained with her master until he died in the Isle of France, where she afterwards married a soldier. Returning to Europe, she died

at Châtillon, and, from a feeling of reverence and veneration for M. Commerson, she left all she possessed to the heirs of the celebrated botanist.

The next traveller who comes under our notice was happily not under the necessity of disguising herself, but travelled with her husband into the desolate lands of the East. This is Madame Hommaire de Hell, who, having lost her parents, was confided to a sister's charge at St Etienne. Here the young man, afterwards celebrated as an explorer, fell so desperately in love with her, that though she was only fifteen, and he still a pupil in the School of Mines, their friends were obliged to yield, and allow them to marry. He soon afterwards obtained a mission to the Turkish government; and the sight of Constantinople, with its veiled women, Persians in peaked caps, Hindu jugglers, black slaves, beggars like disguised princes, and Armenians in the long furred caftan, fired the imagination of the young girl, and she lived in a kind of hallucination. Their hope of success having failed in Turkey, General Potier engaged M. de Hell as engineer on his estate in Kherson, beyond the Dnieper; here it was that his geologist's hammer discovered some rich ironstone, and roused in him the idea of exploring the Caspian Sea and its environs.

The Russian government gave the scheme its support, and in 1840 the journey was begun. 'What happiness,' wrote Madame de Hell, 'to escape from our ordinary prosaic life, its social obligations and routine, and take our flight to the almost unknown shores of the Caspian Sea.' Spring in the steppes brought to her an indefinable charm; the solitude and grandeur of the desert made her sympathise with the passionate love that the Kal-muck feels for it. That they might not perish from hunger, the governor of Astrakhan had chosen a young officer to accompany them, who was a first-rate hunter, and possessed a falcon from which he never separated. The gray sky, darkened by black heavy clouds, and the total silence of these wild shores, became rather oppressive; and when they reached a little Russian colony, the change from the never-varying diet of damper, and the fatiguing pace of the camel, was felt to be most agreeable. Pushing on to the much venerated Mount Ararat, they met with a party of Circassians, the proudest and handsomest men that can be imagined. Here the travellers encountered terrible storms; their carriage was on the verge of being blown over the precipice into the furious river, the lightning being their only guide, and when they reached the station, they were in a most deplorable condition. It would be impossible in this short space to follow this intrepid lady through her seven years' wandering, and we must refer the reader to the work of M. Cortambert—*Les Illustres Voyageuses*. When she and her husband returned to Paris, they were received with the greatest interest, and again accepted a mission to the East, from which M. de Hell never returned. His distressed widow devoted herself henceforward to her children, and the writing of various works of travel.

A Scotch lady, who was married to the French minister at Shanghai, having five times crossed over to Europe by sea, determined to render some service to geographical knowledge by exploring the Tartar regions of Asia: riding through pathless deserts, climbing steep mountains, and fording

deep rivers, sleeping for months under a tent, and living on milk and sea-biscuits. Her husband, M. Bourboulon, another French lady, a maid, a Lama interpreter, a Russian surgeon, and several soldiers, formed the party. A small two-wheeled conveyance served for the ladies, the others were mounted on horseback. They left Pekin amid a blaze of fireworks, without which the Chinese never have any rejoicing, and reached the frontier town of Mongolia, Kalgan; a commercial centre for merchants of many lands, and where the crowd is changing and immense. Ragged Tartars driving their cattle without regard to pedestrians; Tibetans displaying their splendid dresses and flowing hair; camel-drivers of Turkestan bringing in bags of salt, wearing turbans and a long black beard; Mongolian Lamas in red and yellow dress, galloping past on their unbroken horses, contrasted with the calm mien of a Siberian merchant, wearing his polonaise lined with fur, large boots, and beaver-hat.

From hence they penetrated the Desert of Gobi, where a few scattered saxifrages and heaths replaced the beautiful white, yellow, and purple iris, and pinks, which had hitherto bordered their path. The heat was sometimes intense, and when evening came, they most gladly received the jars of water and camels' milk which the native women brought them. On one occasion, a violent altercation ensued, owing to a woman having given some to a stranger before serving her husband. He overthrew her jar, and threw sand over the head of his disobedient wife, amid the laughter of all the shepherds. To the desert succeeded the beautiful green pasturages of the country of the Khalkas; but this Eden was not without its dangers, for the quicksands are so numerous that the horse and its rider are often buried alive, if they venture to stand still. White vapours rising from the ground gave a gigantic size to the leaders of the party, and the mirage would double and treble their number.

The rapidity with which the Mongolian postillions drive their horses makes the journey very painful; they dash over everything, regardless of packing-cases, which leave their contents strewed over the desert. Even the silver money was so worn in its chest, that had the journey lasted long, it would have been ground to powder. Entering the Russian territory, telegas with six horses awaited them; and at Kiachta, the first town, a dinner, concert, and ball made them feel once more within the bounds of civilisation; so many political exiles bring here the refinements of society.

The crossing of Lake Baikal offered some difficulty, as the steamers were under repair, and their heavy dirty boat was caught in a severe squall; but Irkutsk, with its pleasant animated society, made them forget the fatigues of forty days in the desert. The marshes of Baraba were their next trial; here is a succession of lakes, pools, and soft ground covered with a luxuriant vegetation and wild-flowers; but these vast solitudes are inhabited by legions of blood-suckers, from the leech to the mosquito. The tract of country extends from the fifty-second to the sixtieth degree of latitude, and is crossed by a road of fir-trunks.

Leaving the steppes and forests of Siberia, they passed over the Ural mountains, reached Nijni-Novgorod in time to see the celebrated fair, where the people of the East meet the Russians, Jews, Cossacks, and merchants from all parts of Europe.

Mountebanks, actors, and gaming-tables fill immense barracks, and attract crowds. The railway took them to Moscow and St Petersburg, thence to Paris, having accomplished one of the longest land journeys which can be made in four months. Madame de Bourboulon died in 1865, at the early age of twenty-seven.

To English readers, the story of Lady Hester Stanhope's exile to the East, and her travels in the desert to Palmyra and elsewhere, is too well known to need further notice; so we will next turn to one who was famous long before the Alpine Club existed, as having made the ascent of twenty-five Swiss mountains. This was Mademoiselle d'Angeville, who was born in 1794, and was early seized with 'the climbing monomania,' for which her vigorous health and strong will early prepared her. Her first attempt, leading her in the end to try the ascent of Mont Blanc, was to the Mer de Glace and the Jardin. After more than twelve hours' stiff walking, she returned without fatigue to Chamonix. Looking up to the summit then illuminated by the setting sun, and transported with admiration, she said: 'I shall go there.' A few months after, her desire was fulfilled: the Grand Plateau was reached without difficulty; but the pulsation of the heart, owing to the rarefied air, amounting to one hundred and forty beats in a minute, rendered the latter part painful; but once seated on her snowy throne, she could enjoy the view, wrote several letters to her friends, and drank the health of the newly born prince, the son of the Duchess of Orleans. Passing over many other ascents she made, here is one of the latest. At the age of sixty-nine, accompanied by a single guide, she climbed the Oldenhorn in ten hours from the Hôtel des Diablerets. The night overtook them, and the guide declared he had lost his road. Mademoiselle d'Angeville decided to wait on the spot until the break of day, so as to incur no risk; but this the guide said would be too dangerous, on account of the cold. They separated, and he went in search of the nearest chalet, for a lantern; in two hours, he returned, and then the courageous lady saw, not without emotion, that her resting-place was but a few yards from a tremendous precipice. Happily, they soon descended into a place of safety.

During her travels, she made a large collection of plants, minerals, autographs, and the portraits of those she met. She was an excellent mimic, and one of her amusements was to dress up in character and act a part. Thus, borrowing that of an old beggar, she started on the tramp; the cottagers treated her liberally; the curé's servant shut the door in her face; but in the course of three hours she found how good a trade it was, having received between four and five francs.

Madame Ida Pfeiffer, as standing at the head of all female travellers, must close this short survey. Brought up at Vienna as the playfellow of her rough brothers, she soon equalled them in their bold independence, and always wore their dress. At the age of fourteen, to her great grief, her parents put her into a suitable costume, and intrusted the care of her education to a young professor, from whom she received four years of solid instruction, and from a turbulent child was changed into a modest young lady. Her gratitude was boundless; and when a Greek asked her hand in marriage, at the age of seventeen, she discovered

that she could love none but her tutor, who was equally pleased with her. His want of fortune made her parents refuse their consent; three long years passed without their meeting, but their feelings were unchanged. Chance brought them together for a few moments, and Ida's emotion was so great that fever came on, and she was not expected to recover; but a strong constitution overcame all.

Determined not to stay with her parents, she declared her intention of accepting the first offer she received. An estimable man, thirty years older than herself, came forward; and in spite of her romantic disposition, she made an excellent mother and housekeeper. Her sons grew up; and when her duties were ended, at the age of fifty, she determined to indulge in her ardent love for travelling. Her *début* was made in Palestine; and from thence she passed from one adventure to another, endured the most rigorous cold and overpowering heat; went among the savages of South America; braved the tempests of Cape Horn; sat beside Queen Pomare at a banquet in the South Sea Islands; hunted tigers, pistol in hand, in the Indian jungles; descended into the diamond mines of Borneo; was taken prisoner in Madagascar; and explored the country of those terrible cannibals, the Dyaks, who only spared her life in consideration of her age.

Worn down by a terrible fever in Madagascar, she embarked in an almost dying state for Mauritius; the desire of once more reaching Europe sustained her; and she arrived at Vienna in 1858, only to pass a few painful months with failing strength until death released her. It is difficult to pass a judgment on such a singular life: those who think that women are most to be admired when they display their weakness, will consider such bold adventures in the world as a proof of madness; whilst others, believing that women are endowed for every vocation and aspiration, and can feel the noble enthusiasm of great men, will not hesitate to consider Madame Ida Pfeiffer as a wonderful example of courage and self-dependence.

M A R I A N.

CHAPTER XV.

It was nearly the end of October before Miss Gilmour decided at last to return home. The weather had become cold and rainy, and there were signs of an early winter. She began to be anxious to find herself again in her own house, and her dread of the Ellisdean neighbourhood had worn away since she knew that Frank Crawford was in India, that Marian considered her engagement to him completely ended, and since she was able to flatter herself with the expectation of seeing her married within a year to Neil Gilmour. For, though the latter took care not to startle her by any avowed love-making, he privately assured Miss Gilmour that he did not now despair, as he had done, of by-and-by winning her consent to at least a renewal of their old engagement, so long as he did not press for an immediate marriage. Miss Gilmour was satisfied, and waited hopefully, but she did not again speak of the money, and he did not again venture to ask for any. Thus things went on with tolerable smoothness. And for the

first time for long months Marian felt once more a sensation of gladness when she knew that they were going back to Holly Bank. Her aunt's dry face wore a sort of smile of satisfaction as she saw the alacrity with which she prepared for their journey. She could not be thinking of Ellisdean, for Frank was far away; it could only be a natural pleasure at going home again. On the day they were to leave she looked rosier and brighter than she had done since her illness, and she had even dressed herself with greater care. Miss Gilmour made Neil remark the improvement. She herself had within the last year begun to feel some pride in her niece's beauty, and now she was glad to see the soft colour returning to her cheeks, and the animation to her eyes. 'You've never seen her looking her best,' she said to him aside; 'she's never worn the dresses she had at Ellisdean. When we go home, I'll make her put on some of the things I got for her that she was to have had when she was married. Do you remember the family jewels, Neil? She shall have them too when she's your wife. Do you remember how I made her try them on one day?'

Neil did not remember. Miss Gilmour was somewhat offended. He excused his forgetfulness. 'I've seen many sights since that day, Aunt Sarah; it's no wonder that I've forgotten some things.'

'My jewels—my great-uncle's emerald, that he brought with him from India—are not the sort of things one forgets so easily. But I'll let you see them again when we go home. Ah, Neil, it's many a day since I put them away, and said they should be for your wife. My mother used to wear them, and the next Mrs Gilmour shall wear them too.' Neil smiled, but it was a sombre, half-fretted smile, as if the complacent confidence of the speech annoyed as well as amused him.

Miss Gilmour had a prejudice against express trains, and they had to wait for about half an hour at a junction for the one by which she preferred going on to Whiteford. It was a cold windy day, with occasional showers of sleet. She sat by the fire in the waiting-room. Marian and Neil chose rather to walk up and down the platform outside.

They were both silent and thoughtful. Marian almost forgot her companion's presence, as she mused over the probability of her speedy meeting with Lady Augusta and Kate. She had resolved that she would lose no time in trying to see them. Her spirits were reviving: the memory of all their kindness, and of Lady Augusta's motherly tenderness, was forcibly coming back to her, and causing a hope of reconciliation—with them at least—to dawn in her heart. Surely they could not wish to cast her off; and though pride might forbid her to make the first advances again to an explanation with Frank, she felt that she could not help trying to come to an explanation with them. Ah, what comfort it would be even to see their kind faces again, and to mourn with them over the fate that must now separate them! And yet—must it be a separation for ever? Was there no hope? Then a sort of undefined hope did seem to wake in her heart. In her absence of mind she was unconscious of the sharp snow-shower that had come on again; but, as they turned at the end of the platform, a violent gust of wind drove the sleet in their faces, and made Marian stagger back. Neil tried to put up an umbrella, but it was almost immediately turned inside out. Just then, the express train,

which would pass the slow one they were waiting for a little further on, and which only stopped for a few minutes at this station, came crashing in, and drew up alongside the platform.

Marian and Neil were still laughing over his late struggle with the umbrella. The wind, the driving sleet, and the sudden bustle of the arriving train, confused her, and she was standing dangerously close to the edge of the platform, when he drew her back, and made her take his arm to steady her. So they stood for three or four minutes, idly watching the carriages and the faces of the passengers, and exchanging a word now and then. At last the train began to move on, at first slowly. As the carriage just behind the one they had been standing near passed them, Marian looked up, and saw at the window the faces of Lady Augusta and her daughter.

They had already seen her. The window was open, and they could hardly have avoided remarking her. They had been near enough, indeed, to have called her by name if they had liked. But even before she had time to consider all this, she knew in that very moment that she caught sight of them that they had *not* wished to recognise her. Lady Augusta was looking at her as the carriage passed, not with any surprise, but with an expression of mingled sorrow and perplexity, as if she would have liked to speak to her, but dared not. Kate, sitting opposite to her, kept her eyes steadily averted from the platform. Beyond, Marian had a glimpse of a sort of invalid couch, and of old Mr Crawford's gray head. The next moment the train had left the station, and was rapidly sweeping away into the distance.

After this, she did not know how their own journey was resumed. She allowed Neil to guide her across the rails to the opposite platform, and to put her into their own train when it came up, as if she were in a dream. She scarcely broke the dull silence until they arrived at the Whiteford station; then she went up to Neil, as he was getting out their luggage, and, in a blind, helpless way, took hold of his arm.

'Neil,' she murmured, 'will you go and ask somebody if the Crawfords have gone away from Ellisdean ?'

He went away, and in a few minutes came back to her. 'Mr Crawford and Lady Augusta and Miss Crawford have gone. Mr Crawford has gone to consult some new London doctor, and they are not to be at home again until next spring. The Everard Crawfords are going too, but they haven't left Ellisdean yet.'

'Thank you,' said Marian quietly; and then she followed him to the cab which was to take them to Holly Bank.

CHAPTER XVI.

On the week after their arrival, a heavy snow-storm set in. Miss Gilmour was indifferent to the weather. She found occupation enough indoors; and in going through her house, superintending a general scrubbing, dusting, and setting in order, as well as in counting up the expenses of the summer, and wrangling with Barbara, whose temper had not yet recovered from the journey and the unpacking, the days passed for her quickly enough.

But for Marian their dreariness was terrible. She did her best to disguise from herself their blank wretchedness. She would not allow herself

to sit idle, brooding over the disappointment of her last hope of a reconciliation with the friends whom she now felt sure she had lost for ever. The hardest thought to bear of all was that she had been so deceived in their friendship. It had taken long to convince her of it, but now she could no longer doubt that they wished to have nothing more to do with her. Lady Augusta might still feel kindly towards her, but even she had shrunk from trying to renew their intimacy with her, feeling, no doubt, that it was better to let it drop. But how little had she looked for such cool and calculating treatment from her and Kate.

Marian did not doubt that Everard was chiefly to blame for it. She knew his cautious temper well enough to be sure that he must wish to discourage all further intercourse with her, which might have led only to the keeping up of an embarrassing situation. She knew, too, his influence with his family. And yet, in spite of all these reflections, there rested in her mind a dissatisfaction with her own explanations, a painful sense of strangeness and mystery. There was surely something which she could not explain. Something must have taken place—some complication must have occurred in the course of the family councils at Ellisdean, of which she must surely still be ignorant. And what chance had she now of finding out the truth?

In spite of the snow, Neil sometimes made his way into Whiteford, and once or twice Marian accompanied him for the sake of the exhausting struggle through drift and storm, which brought her a temporary relief from her own thoughts. These walks were now her sole comfort. When in Whiteford, she sometimes heard something about the Crawfords. The London physician was believed to have recommended a winter abroad, but it was not known exactly if the party had yet left England. Everard Crawford was still detained at Ellisdean by the storm, which had interrupted some work which he wished to see finished before he left, and which also made it better for his delicate wife to delay her journey south.

One day, in her peregrinations through the house, Miss Gilmour came to Neil's room. He got up to answer her knock; and when she came in, she saw papers which he had not had time to put away, scattered on his table; amongst them was a bill of the sailing of certain Australian steamers. She snatched it up, and for a moment he stood discomfited. But before she could speak, in her surprise and rage, he had recovered himself, and taken his resolution, though, in the hurry of the moment, he was obliged to speak without pre-meditation.

'Yes, Aunt Sarah; it's no use putting it off. I'm glad you've seen that bill, for I was only waiting for an opportunity of telling you. Where's Marian ?'

'Down-stairs, at her work; and, amazed at his coolness, she involuntarily waited for him to go on.

'Ah! she hasn't told you anything, I suppose ?'

'Told me anything! No.'

'So much the better. I said I would speak to you myself.'

'What have you got to say to me? Is it—is it—Have you asked her?' And forgetting the sailing-bill, which dropped on the floor, she gazed at him with eager joy.

He hesitated a moment. 'Well—yes,' he said at last.

Miss Gilmour was for a minute speechless. The darling wish of her heart was fulfilled, and at a moment when she had not been expecting it! She could not even at first ask if Marian had accepted him, but she never doubted that she had; for, suddenly remembering how, while she had been busy with other things, Neil and Marian had been left to each other's company—remembering, too, the girl's quiet composure of manner, the dullness which she mistook for contentment, the incessant striving to find some occupation, which she mistook for cheerfulness, she was scarcely surprised at the news which now met her. All had come right at last, then! The two persons to whom indeed she secretly clung with far more affection than her reserved nature had the power of expressing, were to make each other and herself happy at last! The object which had been uppermost in her mind for so long was gained!

Marian, busy in the parlour with an old dress which she was turning, trying to interest herself in her work, and to find satisfaction in planning the re-arrangement of breadths and gores, was surprised at the new gentleness and kindness in her aunt's manner when she came in later to speak to her, and desire her to put away her work and go out for a walk.

'You needn't work at that old dress, child; you shall have a new one. I've plenty of dresses for you up-stairs, and I'll let you have them whenever you like. You've been a good girl, Marian.' She kissed her, and, to Marian's wonder, a tear, which had not been in her own eyes, dropped on her cheek. For the first time during that dreary time since they had come home, her own dull, tearless composure was shaken at this unexpected token of sympathy.

'O Aunt Sarah!' she cried, throwing her arms round the old woman's neck, and laying her head on her shoulder—'O Aunt Sarah!' She could say no more; the sobs, which had been so long of coming, were nearly choking her.

'Yes, yes, my dear,' said Miss Gilmour, soothing and petting her, as Marian had been thinking nobody would ever pet her again—'yes, yes; I know all about it. That'll do. Neil's been talking to me, and we've arranged it all. When he goes back to Australia, you and I will take care of each other.'

'When he goes back—to Australia!'

'Well, you see, he says he must go, and I've agreed.'

'And he is—really going?' Marian spoke regretfully. She thought that she would be still lonelier when he was gone.

'Yes; but don't fret about it. There now; I oughtn't to have told you, for he said he wanted to tell you himself. Go away, and put on your things, and go out with him now. God bless you, Marian, my child! You'll make me a happy old woman yet.'

No suspicion of the real meaning of her aunt's words presented itself to her mind. Of late, Neil's behaviour to her had been more and more brotherlike, so that her fears of his still thinking of obtaining her for a wife were almost entirely laid at rest. She thought that her aunt, too, had abandoned the idea of their marriage, and now she only supposed that she was talking of a peace-

ful future for their two selves, when they should again be left alone with each other at Holly Bank. And if Miss Gilmour's temper was to become so softened as the increased kindness with which she had lately treated her niece gave reason to suppose possible, there might be peace at last, if no very great pleasure in their home during the remainder of her days. Perhaps the failing old woman was beginning to long for such peace, and was willing to sacrifice something to obtain it.

Marian set out on her walk in a spirit more nearly approaching resignation to her future life than she had yet known. But when she began to ask Neil about the plans of which he had been speaking to Miss Gilmour, he only gave her short vague answers, and she accordingly refrained from questioning him. Their walk, as usual, was along the most beaten and practicable road, and took them into the town, where there was, as usual, some trifling commission to be done. They had turned homeward again, and were just clear of the town, when, for the first time, Neil of his own accord spoke.

'Marian, do you know what people have been saying about us in Whiteford for the last three months—that we are engaged to one another?'

She stood still, gazing at him.

'Come on,' he said. 'Let us get away from the place. I want to talk to you.'

'Neil! You knew this—and you have been letting me walk about there with you! Oh!'

'Listen to me. It hasn't been my fault. I only heard of it the other day. As for our walk to-day, it doesn't matter. But it is true that for three months past—perhaps for longer—who can tell—the report has been going about that you and I are engaged.'

'Have you contradicted it?' She stood still again, fixing on him a fiery impatient glance, and speaking with the imperious air of an offended princess. He was cowed for a moment, for he did not know her in this new mood.

'I can contradict it of course, if you wish.'

'If I wish!'

They walked on a few steps in silence, Marian hurrying on as if she longed to be at the end of her walk.

'Stop!' he said at last desperately, his resolution returning as he felt the necessity of carrying out the plan he had determined on. 'You must hear what I've got to say to you. If I am to do anything to help you, you must listen to me patiently.'

'Help me! I do not want you to help me in anything. I only expect that you will at once contradict this report. Three months! All the time that we were at Bridge of Allan!'

'Yes; all that time this report was believed here. And of course the Crawfords heard it.'

'The Crawfords!'

'Yes.—Stop, Marian; walk slower. Do you see now that I can do something to help you?'

'What do you mean? What can you do? Oh, good Heavens! could that have been the reason?'

'That they wouldn't speak to you that day at the station? I saw them too. Yes; no doubt that was the reason. You remember how we were standing there together?'

Marian clasped her hands with an exclamation of indignant distress.

'I will tell you something else that has occurred to me,' said Neil insinuatingly. 'I can't help

thinking that some accident must have happened to the letters you wrote ; or perhaps some accident happened to the *answers* which you should have received.'

'What do you mean ?' she repeated, but more quietly. She was becoming tamed, half-stupefied by the strangeness of the conversation.

'Well, it is just possible, you know, that there may have been—if not an accident—some unfair play somewhere. Shall I tell you why I think so ? I met Mr Everard Crawford a day or two ago.'

'You met Everard Crawford ?'

'Yes ; I chanced to be of some use to him. He was riding into Whiteford, and his horse—a brute that looked as if it had never had more than three legs at the best, but I heard he picked it up cheap somewhere—had slipped and fallen on that awkward bit of road just as you get near the Ellisdean woods. Well, I helped him to get the beast on his legs again, and he politely begged to know whom he had to thank for the service. I told him my name ; and the hurry in which he seemed to be to get off when he heard it, struck me at once. A sudden thought occurred to me. I've been turning over in my own mind this affair of the letters, and I had my suspicions. I knew very well, from all I had heard of Mr Everard Crawford, that he wasn't very likely to have approved of his brother's marrying a girl who had no more than a few thousand pounds, and I determined—on the spur of the moment, I admit, so, perhaps, it wasn't the most prudent way of setting to work—to find out from him whether *your letters had been received or not*. You understand ? But I had hardly begun my first speech, I had hardly named your name, when he stopped me. He "begged leave to say that neither he nor his family wished to have any sort of communication in future with Miss Gilmour or her niece." And away he went. I had heard Mr Everard Crawford spoken of as a model of courtesy, but his way of leaving me shewed very little of it. I could only conclude that he had good reason to dislike the chance of my questioning him. What do you think ?'

'You think—you think he kept back my letters ?'

'Yes, I do.'

'Impossible !' Marian gasped after a minute. 'I know him. He is—I know what he is. Ah, I can believe he did not wish my marriage. But—he is—yes, he is a gentleman, I think. He couldn't have done such a thing !'

'Well, you may be right. But I have very strong suspicions.'

'What shall I do ?' murmured Marian. 'If I thought—that Frank had never got my letter !' She stopped, and her face became radiant for a moment with joy. Then her look changed. 'No, no ; it is no use. Ah ! what shall I do ?'

'I will tell you what can be done ; we can find out the truth.'

'How—how ?'

'Leave it to me. Of course you couldn't manage it. It would hardly do—would it?—for you to write to Lady Augusta to accuse her son of such an action without being very sure that you had good grounds to go on.'

'Write to Lady Augusta ! No, no.'

'And if you appealed to Everard Crawford himself, why, of what use would it be ? You are in a peculiar position, too, as regards the Crawfords ;

you can hardly take any steps to come to an explanation with them without making it seem as if you wanted—'

'Do you think I need to be told that ? Do you think I would do anything to make Frank—But oh, if it has been all a misunderstanding !'

'Well, at anyrate they must now be under the impression that you are going to marry me. There has been time even for the report to reach India.'

'Neil, what do you mean ? Why do you say all this to me now ? Why do you torment me in this cruel way ? You know I am helpless. Ah, if I could have seen Lady Augusta or Kate, only for a minute ! But—but I can let them know at least that this report is false.'

'Yes, but—suppose they should not be particularly anxious to bring about a reconciliation between you and Frank ! Suppose they should object to his marrying you with only five thousand pounds ! Besides, you can't be sure that your aunt will even give you that now. I know what you are thinking—that she has been kinder to you lately. But she has had a reason for that—she wants you to marry me, and she has been fancying that you will do so.'

'She cannot think so,' said Marian passionately.

'She does think so. Now, let me speak, Marian, and listen to me patiently. I want to be your friend. Haven't I tried to befriend you already ?'

'Yes,' said Marian hesitatingly, as he waited for an answer.

'Yes ! You know I have ! Didn't I get your aunt to agree at last to your marriage ? Do you know what it cost me to promise that I would remain with her at this home of hers, instead of returning to the only place where—where I can feel a free man again ? It was only because I swore that if she persecuted you any longer I would leave her, that she relented at last.'

'I know,' said Marian with compunction. 'You were very good then, Neil.'

'Well, now, I am ready to do still more for you.'

'You mean,' said she in a low voice, for she was beginning to be impressed again by his disinterested devotion to her, 'that you have got her to agree to your leaving us. But—'

'Yes, I will get her to agree to my going away ; and once I am away, that rumour will die out of itself. But before I go, I'll tell you what I can do for you : I can see Everard Crawford ; I can get the truth out of him. You can trust me. I'll tell you exactly how I propose to deal with him, and you will be satisfied. I can, if you like, follow Lady Augusta herself. It is easier to talk than to write on such matters, and it will be far easier for me to talk than for you. At all events, the first thing to do is to discover the truth about these letters. All we want—all you want to be assured of is, that they were safely received. I will find that out for you, and without compromising one atom of your dignity. Will you trust me to do it ?'

'Yes, yes,' said Marian eagerly. 'O Neil, if you will do that for me !'

'I will do it for you. And I'll do more. Marian, if I go away to Australia, I shall never come back again.'

She was silent.

'Don't you see what I mean ? You will be left

here alone with Aunt Sarah. She—well, though I may get her to agree to let me go out for another year or two—she will be angry when she finds that I don't mean to come back; and then she will turn more and more to you. As for me, I frankly tell you I know that by going back to Australia I forfeit all my chances of succeeding to her money. It will all come to you. You will be the heiress again; and people will soon find that out.'

'I shall not be the heiress,' said Marian calmly and with dignity. 'Aunt Sarah will not behave so to you, and even if she did, I should not keep the money.'

'You wouldn't keep it!' he exclaimed. 'I believe you,' he added, with something like emotion in his voice. 'Marian, you're a fine creature. You were always too good for me.'

'There would be nothing very good in it. But we needn't talk of that. Besides, why should you go?'

He was silent for a minute or two; he seemed to be struggling with himself. Then, with a sort of rough abruptness, as if he were combating some secret opposing influence, he said: 'I tell you, I must go. Would you have me stay here only to be a curse and a torment to you? For, remember, if I stay, I have pledged myself to get you to promise to marry me within another year's time. She will give us no peace; she will disinherit both of us, if we try to thwart her. There's only one thing for us to do. Understand me. I can't help myself. I would go away and leave you in peace to-morrow if I could; but the fact is, I have heavy debts, and I daren't try to leave the country until they are paid; I should be arrested. Do you see now why I must try to humour her still?'

'She will surely pay your debts for you,' said Marian, rather shocked.

'No; she won't: she does not know of them. I could not venture to tell her at first, and now she would never understand: *you* couldn't understand either if I were to try to explain to you. Marian, have some pity on me. I helped you once; I want your help now. Will you do what I ask you?'

'What is it?'

'Promise me you will do it.'

She thought a moment, then answered gravely and firmly: 'I will do anything for you, except promise to marry you.'

'I don't ask you to marry me.'

'Then tell me what you want; I will do it.'

'I want money,' he said after another pause. 'It is absolutely necessary for me that I should obtain within the course of this next week a certain sum of money. If I can get it, I leave Holly Bank for ever. She has promised me this money. I will never ask her for more. I know, indeed, it would be useless for me to expect more from her, therefore you may be satisfied that I will never trouble her again, if I get what she has promised to give me now. I have arranged it all with her. I have told her that I must go out to Australia for another year. After I have been gone—when I reach Australia—or I may even write to her before I sail—but, at all events, as soon as I prudently can, I shall write to her, and tell her the real truth, that I have gone away for altogether. Now, all I ask you to do is to allow her to suppose that—that what I have told her already *is* the truth.'

'You have told her that you mean to come back in a year?'

'Yes—to marry you.'

Marian stood confounded. She understood now what her aunt had meant.

LEGENDS ON HOUSES.

In old times, both in 'merrie England' and 'bonnie Scotland,' it was not unusual to place short legends, or mottoes, upon the façades of houses. These inscriptions were generally cut over the doorways, in the position where nobles and gentles displayed their coats-of-arms upon more important edifices; though, occasionally, they were spread along the lintels of the windows, or carved upon tablets that were inserted in conspicuous places. Most of them, like the shop signs of medieval London, have disappeared; but there are still some interesting examples in various parts of Great Britain. In the pleasant cider county, Devon, there are a few of these legends, but only a few. We may look through the sunny watering-places, and the stony coombes, and the bowery nooks, screened in with tors, in this old land of the Raleighs, Drakes, Bassets, and Carews, and not find one. We may scan, too, the scores of ripe old manor-houses, now turned into inviting farm-houses, in vain. The vicarage-house of Colyton, about seven miles from Honiton, however, yields us one example. It was built in the early days of the Tudors, by Thomas Brerewood, vicar, who placed the arms of his bishop over the door, and this motto over a window: *Peditatio totum: meditatio totum.* About ten years, too, before this clerky Thomas began to rate the cost of his erection, a Devonshire merchant and his wife set about building an almshouse in Tiverton. The prosperous trader, however, did not live to see his benevolent intention quite accomplished; and his representatives recorded his death upon the front of the building in this manner:

John Waldron, merchant, and Richoard his wife,
Buildid this house in tyme of their lyfe.
At such time as the walls were fourtyne foote
hye,
He depardeid this worlde, even the eightynthe of
Julye.

A.D. 1519.

There is yet another legend among the apple orchards and myrtles of Devonshire. In the parish of Wolborough is a small hospital, founded by Lucy Lady Reynall nearly a hundred and twenty years after the considerate John Waldron departed this world. Lady Reynall's sympathies flowed towards widows, and this charity was devoted to their comfort. She intended the retreat for the occupancy of four widows of clergymen; and over the door she caused to be inscribed these pithy lines:

The Widowes House—1638.

Is't strange a prophet's widowes poore should be?
If strange, then is the Scripture strange to thee.

Around Manchester, out among the old rivulets, woodlands, and moorlands, beyond the shadows of the new factories, and the smoke from tapering chimneys and low lines of small houses, there are several interesting halls belonging to Tudor times. They are chiefly half-timbered mansions with many oriel and gables, built before the local

gentry dreamed of the great change the cotton industry was to make in the neighbourhood of their estates; and some of them are still rich with the Elizabethan panelling and stucco-work that were placed in them when they were newly erected. One of these sunny and dreamy old places, Handforth Hall, has this inscription cut on the carved and moulded lintel: *This house was builded in the year of our Lord God 1557 by Miriam Brereton, Knight, whom maryed Margaret, daughter and heare of William Handforth of Handforthe Chause, and had issue 6 sonnes and 2 daughters.*

In Stuart times, 'Fear God and Honour the King' appears to have been a popular motto from its repetition. 'God's Providence is mine inheritance' was another favourite. This motto was placed upon the foundation-stone of the Blue-coat School in Bath so late as the day when Beau Nash was lording it in that city, and the belles bathing in the morning, or promenading in the pump-room, and dancing minuets in lappets in the evening, under his auspices. The individual examples are, however, of more interest than those of frequent recurrence. An early Stuart inscription is to be seen on Fountain's Hall, near Fountain's Abbey, in Yorkshire, that is well worthy of record. The Hall was built out of the grand old abbey stones in 1611, by Sir Stephen Proctor. Over the doorway he set his crest and that of his wife, with this motto: *Rien trovant, gainevray tout* ('Finding nothing, yet possessing all things'). This was doubtless true, as far as building materials were concerned.

There is a longer legend over the low doorway of an ancient hostelry, near the massive gateway, called Hotspur's Tower, that is the southern entrance into the Border town of Alnwick. This inscription is cut into the wide lintel, and runs thus: *That which your father old hath purchased and left you to possess, do you dearly hold to shew his worthiness.* The little inn is built of stone, and has a thatched roof. It has also a square bay projecting from the centre of it, from which there is a cheerful gleam upon the roadway at night. The cosy nook within, as well as the outward gleam at night, has, doubtless, comforted the heart of many a straggler from vanquished hosts, and many a wayfarer across the perilous country in the old times of Border warfare. The great gloomy gateway, close by, is twice as high and twice as cumbersome; but the two are, nevertheless, in keeping, for this ancient defence-work has a panel charged with the Percy lion upon its grave and lofty front. The great castle of the Percies, at the northern entrance into the town, has the same heraldic lion carved over the gateway of the barbican, with the motto of the old heroes, *Esperance en Dieu*, below it. Very sombre, very mournful and hoary, are all three on a dull gray day; but as we turn from them in the sunshine, they have a radiant mellow look, like that of corn in August.

At Warkworth, still in Northumberland, there is another legend. This occurs over the doorway of the lonely leafy hermitage of the unfortunate hermit of Warkworth. After we have come upon the river Coquet, and have passed the old Norman church, and the steep gray street, and have looked up at the mighty roofless castle on the height above, we follow the windings of the stream till we come upon a white sandstone cliff on the opposite side of the water. The hermitage is in this cliff. Landing in front of it, for there is a ferry-

boat down among the reeds and the long grass at the water's edge, and pushing aside the branches of trees and shrubs in our way, we can read upon the lintel of the doorway: *Fuerunt mihi lacrymae meae panes die ac nocte* ('My tears have been my meat day and night'). Only when we have looked upon the work of the hermit's hands, the rude groaning of the chapel roof scooped out of the rock, the lancet-windows looking out upon the troubled water, the traceried opening into the confessional within, the sculptured rood, the full-length effigy of the luckless lady of his love, the cold stone cell, and vacant, silent solitude, can we realise the pathos of this cry.

Northwards, in the royal city of Edinburgh, there is a much larger number of these ancient legends. They are on the oldest buildings. It is necessary to look well for them, or the charm of the round and cone-capped staircase towers, of the peaked and stepped gables, of the oriel thrown out at the angles of houses, from the first floor upwards only, so as to leave due space for pedestrians below, will cause them to be overlooked. In the Nether Bow, as we draw towards Holyrood Palace, we are stopped by the quaint half-timbered manse of John Knox. Between the ground-floor and the first overhanging stage runs this characteristic command: *Life-God.abye-al-and-yn-nychbovr-as-yn-self.* And we ponder and wonder, as we read, whether the beautiful Queen Mary was neighbour to John Knox in his heart, as she was literally in her palace close by. We light upon further specimens from time to time as we are noting the contrast between the steep bare houses of one old time with the lower and more snug-looking buildings of a still older period—counting the stages of the one, following the moulded string-courses of the other as they rise and fall over the window-openings—or admiring the clever manner in which the old Scottish masons corbelled out windows high in the air. Some are in *closes*, or narrow passages, others overlook square courts, and some front the main thoroughfares. In the course of structural changes within the last forty years, many of these carved inscriptions have disappeared. Of the limited number now remaining, a few are in Latin. A little below Moray House there is a mansion with two tablets upon it. One asks: *Hodie mihi: cras tibi. Cur igitur curas?* 1570. The other says: *Ut tu lingue tuae, sic ego mear, aurium, Dominus sum.* And then along the front is spread out, *Constanti pectori res mortalium umbra.* Several more are given in the *Traditions of Edinburgh*, including that incentive to exertion: *He yt tholis overcvmnis.*

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